The Church and the Challenge of Marxism

A Tract for our Times

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Prefatory Note.

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The Church and the Challenge of Marxism

When I moved from the Medway Towns to Warwick in 1949, I left an experimental field in which I had been granted freedom to study and work out empirically new methods of approach to the manifold problems of the Church in her present situation.* That freedom had been granted me by authority because the parish church of Chatham was in the heart of a local industrial community where virtually the Church's work on conventional lines had come to a standstill. By the time I went to Warwick, my experience at Chatham had brought me into close association with other parsons of like mind and similar experience in other parts of the country. We recognised that we shared a common concern.

CHRISTIAN MINISTRY TO-DAY

During the last ten years, like many other groups, we have met from time to time to study and discuss the questions which the exigencies of the modern situation throw up with practical urgency concerning Christians in the modern world. The fact that we were all Christian ministers (some are now Bishops) committed to jobs which occupied us heavily, necessitated that we could meet only occasionally and that our studies and researches were individual rather than collective. We could do little more than try to face up intellectually and emotionally to the colossal challenge with which avowed Christians in the twentieth century are confronted, and set down interim findings and circulate them privately. We were all only too aware that what was needed was a long and intensive period of study and research by such a group, and that our abortive conferences left us with the questions much clearer than the answers.

I am personally indebted to these meetings, particularly because they enabled me to see how I myself ought to serve the present Church. Hence my readiness to move from Warwick and become Rector of St. Mary-le-Bow in the City of London and Director of Studies in the Industrial Christian Fellowship. This, which may on the face of it appear two separate and distinct jobs, offers me, as I see it, a single vocation. For St. Mary-le-Bow is a church in the process of being re-built from its very foundations at the hub of the twentieth century industrial world, and the potential rôle of the Industrial Christian Fellowship has a great deal of light to throw on how that ought to be done. I am seeking here to say why that is so.

I have come to the conviction that all the questions which challenge the Church of to-day, and they are legion, uncover a root question which waits to be simply and clearly answered. It is a question which, for various reasons, many church people assume is already answered, *viz.*:—What is

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* For a full description of that experimental work see *Medway Adventure* (Michael Joseph, Ltd. 1946).

the Christian ministry in the modern world ? The operative words there are to my mind " ministry " and " modern ". The various answers which mislead us into taking the question for granted do not face up to what those two words mean. " Ministry " must mean serving an actual existing need, and " modern " must mean the *given* world as it is. I do not think that the Church is often to be found serving the actual existing need of people to-day, precisely because we of the Church have not studied or understood enough the *given* world as it is.

HOW ARE WE NEEDED NOW ?

I realised then, as I do now, that we cannot serve the need of people in a world we neither know nor understand. We try to bring them to enjoy our traditional religious festivals and celebrations and, of course, to baptism, confirmation, and all the rest, and for the most part they refuse what we have to offer to the glory of God. Is it conceivable that they do not feel the need of these things ? We claim that they ought to need them. But that is not the point. We cannot minister to a need which people do not actually feel. We merely waste our time and theirs, by trying to create a feeling of need in them when they are, in fact, pre-occupied by other needs. Maybe people did once feel the need of baptism, confirmation and the rest. Maybe they will again. But for the present, in the modern world, the Christian ministry must answer a different need. And the immediate and urgent task of avowed Christians is surely to study and know the modern world and to discover the actual present need of the people in it.

So at the outset at this ancient church of St. Mary-le-Bow, I am not primarily concerned with restoring a building in which hypothetical needs may be provided for, but rather with creating a place of meeting in which the actual need of people to-day can be discovered and articulated and in some measure answered. That is a formidable task, because the modern world is multifariously complex. But that in itself provides the main clue to what the Church has to do, if it will serve effectively to-day. There is a clear need of a Church capable of doing a job integral to our complex situation. Just as Moses had to meet the challenge of the Agricultural Revolution and its results, so we have to cope with the challenge which the Industrial Revolution has brought out.

The modern world of mankind is modern because its group-life is industrial rather than agricultural—that is to say, its group-life everywhere is to a considerable extent determined by the nature of the industrial development begun by James Watt's invention of the condensing steam engine nearly two hundred years ago. To a considerable extent determined by it ! But to what extent ? Upon the right answer to that question depends whether or not the Church can get down to doing a job integral to our complex situation. As things are, the Church is vastly under-rating the extent to which industrial group-life governs the whole modern situation and determines the lives and the needs of the people living in it. One categorical answer to that question has already been given, and as a result, one-half of the world is organised towards answering its needs on the basis of that answer. Have we of the Church yet given enough serious consideration to the implications and validity of that answer, as it is clearly stated by Karl Marx, in the preface to his *Critique of Political Economy* ?

WHAT DID MARX SAY IN 1859 ?

Here is what Marx actually wrote in that epoch-making work which he published in 1859—(the year in which were also published Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Mills' *Essay on Liberty*). Karl Marx said:

"The general conclusion at which I arrived and which, once reached, continued to serve as the leading thread in my studies, may be briefly summed up as follows:

(1) In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will;

(2) These relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production;

(3) The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society—the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of consciousness;

(4) The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life;

(5) It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness . . ."

Can we brush these findings aside, without testing first how far they are true of our modern world? In effect, the Marxist position is that our industrial group-life determines the entire life of all individuals in society. It insists that we are, therefore, what our industrial life makes us.

This a century ago could be dismissed much more airily than to-day. Since Marx wrote it, a whole climate of culture has grown up with little or no conscious reference to the Christendom from which it emerged. The industrial order of to-day has created and is continually creating its own patterns not only of work and leisure but also of social life, thought and art to which no Church or faith (unless it be "Marxism") can justifiably claim at present to be integral. What the ecclesiastic describes to-day as an overwhelmingly secular civilisation is in fact the world which modern industrial group-life predominantly determines. Whether the Church likes it or not, this is the *given* world whose need the Church must serve, if it is to fulfil any Christian ministry at all. The world to which the clerical profession (which in effect is virtually the Church of to-day) constantly harks back is a pre-industrial society far less complex and less fluid than our own.

Hence the futility of seeking to impose upon the patterns of the new industrial order, wherever we see the opportunity, the ideas derived only from our own ecclesiastical culture, and attempting to draw people out of it (their own world) into "the ecclesiastical edifice round the corner". If ecclesiastical Christianity and Karl Marx are diametrically opposed in this field, then events overwhelmingly prove that the empirical truth of the matter lies with Marx rather than with us. As this century goes on, a Church which seeks to do its job with a lofty disregard for the truth of this main Marxist contention is doing little more than covering up its ignorance. We would do best to acknowledge without further delay that Marx did us a very great service when he drew our attention to the fact that man's industrial group-life moulds the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes which determine his existence. For that reason, it is of supreme importance that our industrial group-life should be the very best possible that we can achieve. It is upon that point in the modern world that the Church should bend all its studies and concentrate all its attention. And we would do well to begin by admitting (as in fact all our authoritative publications on the subject so far plainly show) that we have a great deal to learn before we can claim with truth to understand the nature and needs of the industrial order which moulds and governs us no less than the rest of the world.

NO NEED FOR FEAR

One thing we have to overcome at the outset, and that is a fear of the industrial world, as though it were alien from ourselves, governed and directed by a *mystique* which we shall never be able to comprehend. It is without doubt a complicated and bewilderingly departmentalised maze of structures and groupings. But the satisfactory management of industrial group-life means simply that consumers, investors (state or private) and people on the payroll should be equally content with their group associations. We of the Church are not required necessarily to be economic or managerial or organisational experts. On the contrary, the cobbler does well to stick to his last.

The Church should never be required to get itself lost in the ramifications of human activities, but always to seek for the basic pattern, the fundamental or final simplicity which alone can integrate human group-life. To that end, what we have to do now is to study the industrial situation not with regard to the minutiae of its technicalities, but with special attention to its range and scope, and to its immediate general problems. This is not to deny that there has to be realised a mystical feeling in the industrial order. The mystique of Marxism is already revealing that this feeling, even among professed "materialists" is bound to be recognised in any serious attempt to integrate industrial group-life. Probably the chief cause of the lack of common enthusiasm in the industrialisation of the West in peace-time is that we have lost much of our integral religious expression. But the Christian Church cannot supply that lack by seeking to superimpose a "christianism" on various departments of what it labels industry.

There is a basic concept of Christianity embedded in the industrial order, even as it now is, which must be led to articulate and express itself. That is the Church's true rôle in the world at any time—to take people as they are and to persuade and lead them to that common consciousness of a God of love in their very midst—which, in other words, is to bring them to a realisation of what makes good group-life and what brings enjoyment from the arduous struggle to achieve it. In my view it is precisely for the fulfilment of that function that the people in our industrial order need the Church—if not this Church, then a Church which will accept such a ministry. The over-zealous Churchman says "Ah, but is this the ministry of Christ?" or "Is this a priestly ministry?" or "Where in this ministry are the marks of true catholicity?" My answer is that this is the ministry of Christ because it serves the deepest need of man as he is, that it is a priestly ministry because, as I shall show, it must involve man in the highest self-offering of which he is capable, and that it has all the marks of catholicity which are to be discerned in the religion of the New Testament.

EXPERIMENT IN THE NEW, NOT REORGANISATION OF THE OLD

In the ten years since the Medway Adventure, discussions with my contemporaries have tended to be occupied with the necessary reorganisation of the existing "ministry" of the Church in order to meet the needs of its twentieth century situation. There we were persisting in the use of the word "ministry" to describe the actual field-workers of the Church, even though we were seeking to extend it beyond its present confinement to the paid staff in the present parochial organisation and to include all who, paid or unpaid, were professing active members of the Church. I now feel that in doing so we were off the real beam, or rather we were trying to map out a field which we had not yet reached. Re-organisation of the existing man-power in the Church and the provision of new types of para-parochial church workers are projects which must wait upon the achieve-

ment of a radically new conception of Christian ministry. What we need for the present is to encourage varied types of ministerial experiment within the actual situation, with the proviso that they all, no matter how diverse their approach and methods, seek primarily to study and understand the situation rather than to invade it with an evangelistic zeal not according to knowledge. "To possess what we do not possess, we must go by way of dispossession". There is little evidence that we yet possess an understanding as a Church of the needs of individuals in modern industrial group-life, and if with sympathy we would possess that understanding, as indeed we must, then we have to jettison voluntarily a good deal of our existing equipment and carry with us only the bare essentials of our present churchmanship.

THE GROUP AND "I"

So for my part I am taking up now the lessons which the experience by the Medway taught me, since nothing I have studied or learned in the last ten years has done anything but confirm the main findings of those years at Chatham. As it seemed to me then, the first task imposed by the Marxist challenge was to study much more closely what is implied in human group-life. Willy-nilly, according to Marx, as consumers, producers, or investors, we all enter into certain relations with each other in human society because our industrial organisation demands it. This he asserts is the real basis of all other forms of group-life and determines how we live, think and feel. The economic structure of society compels us into our various forms of group-life, and thus into our differing patterns of consciousness. Whether or not we accept this doctrine, in its entirety, there can be no denying that human life consists of individuals brought for one reason or another into groups, in shops, offices, fields, mines and factories and that the groups which come about with the minimum of choice on the part of the individuals comprising them, are those which make up the complex of industrial life.

I came to see very soon by the Medway that industrial grouping cannot be confined to a mere section of society, but that in fact every member of it entered into one form or more of the groups constituting our industrial order. None of us is outside an industrial group, by the very nature of the structure of our industrial civilisation. For industry is, indeed, constituted only of producers, investors and consumers, and we are all one or other of these, and any of us can be all of them at once. Like many others, I had hitherto failed to grasp the full force of this fact, assuming that any reference to industry meant merely those groups of people involved in forms of production. It had not occurred to me that when I bought a product or paid my taxes, I myself was thereby a member of a consumer and investor group within the total structure of industry. It was necessary to realise the modern world as a labyrinthine complex of human groups determined, as Marx declared, by the structures of our industrial life. When I paid my taxes, I invested money in various forms of production, including armaments; when I bought a cake of soap, I was involved with the lives of others concerned with the investment, production and distribution of that commodity. In this participation in industrial groupings I had as little choice as everybody else.

The only way to contract out of the industrial life of the world was to find a desert island.

HOW CAN A FREE WORLD COMPETE WITH MARXISM?

It was more than difficult to resist the Marxist contention that the economic structure of industrial civilisation was all-important, and much too easy to reason with those who claim to follow the Marxist doctrine to its logical conclusion that by totalitarian control of industrial group-life, the character of the social, political and spiritual processes of human life

and the achievement of a common consciousness may be pre-determined. But that left out a whole range of questions arising from the very nature of man, questions which, however inadequately so far, the whole democratic development in history seeks to answer. There must be a twentieth century alternative to the Marxist answer to the old Christian challenge. Admitting the supreme importance of the achievement of the best possible industrial group-life, how was it to be effected within the context of democratic institutions ? Was it reconcileable with the Christian ideal of a free society ?

These were the questions which led me to the conviction that the Church had an integral part to play in the modern industrial situation. But to do that, we had first to know a great deal more about human group-life, and the most direct way to study that was to become involved actively in groups of various kinds. That made the texture of my experience by the Medway—an involvement in various heterogeneous groups in the neighbourhood and the gradual discernment of a basic pattern common to them all. I was fortunate in that I was joined and helped in my search by a number of intelligent and thoughtful people in the neighbourhood, but to one in particular, George Dickson, I was indebted for the main clues to what I sought. He was among other things at that time managing director of one of the largest production plants by the Medway ; and, though he had little knowledge of churches, he knew industry through and through, and was wonderfully patient in imparting his knowledge to me. It was, for instance, through him that I finally cured myself of the academic habit of regarding industry as " factories and all that sort of thing ", and came to see that the word in fact covered our total world situation, and involved every living soul in its complex life. We have continued to meet regularly over the last fifteen years and discuss the task of the Church in the industrial order, and what I am trying to communicate now is as much his as my own mind on the subject.

THE BASIC PATTERN OF ALL GROUP-LIFE

The study of human group-life does yield an undeniable basic pattern common to all groups of people of any kind whatsoever. It is a pattern of individual interests, for what brings individuals together in association for any end is the desire to satisfy certain needs of the self. It is this fact which offers the beginning of a convincing democratic answer to the Marxist challenge. For an individual, to whatever degree he may be conscious of doing so, is a member of a group of others because that association promises a future development in which he is interested, to which he will give his share and from which he will demand his share, according to the relationship determined already by his past association with the group. There seems to be without doubt this constant pattern of four basic interests of all individuals comprising groups, and this gives the *raison d'être* to every human association. " Where two or three are gathered together ", the group-identity is fashioned by these four interests: (a) in the future, (b) in giving, (c) in getting, (d) in the past.

Clearly, the possible permutations and combinations of these four basic interests are considerable. Individuals differ as to the extent to which they are interested in giving to the group or getting from it, or in its future or in its past. An association of individuals will be loose or close according to the power of a discoverable principle of coherence, related to the dominance of one or other of those four interests. The identity or character of any human group depends on the balancing and ratio of these motivating forces to each other. One could adduce endless examples of group-life to demonstrate how they have their particular character because the dominant individual interest in them is in the past or the future, or in giving or in getting. But this obviously in our situation is a matter of more than mere academic observation. If what is implicit in the democratic ideal is to have effective meaning, the important question for all of

us, since we must willy-nilly live in groups is—which of these individual interests must predominate in the balancing process if the best group-life is to be achieved ?

In the Medway towns we learnt to equate the basic group interest in the following way:

(1) Employment resources could be looked on as the industrial phrase representing our capacity to give:

(2) Consumer needs require adequate satisfaction in getting value for money:

(3) Planning, based on imaginative and intelligent Research and Development work, should serve most of our dreams of the future by indicating exciting Trade and Employment Targets to aim at: while

(4) Accountancy and financial control (who dares to dispute it?) will insinuate its way correctively with its evidence of the Past—often too much evidence of the Past—in everything we do or want to do, either as Managing Directors, Advertising Managers, Sales Managers, or keen Trades Unionists.

Then the democratic key point of our pattern must be:

(5) An agreed common objective that will satisfy all of us, both emotionally and intellectually—either as Managing Directors or shop-floor labourers.

It may be claimed that the Church has for long ages been seeking to establish this principle of a true harmony of interests in the life of the individual. No doubt their unbalance in individuals is of importance in the life of the soul, as an abstraction from the life of the world. But here the Marxist challenge returns with renewed force. How far is it useful or effective to attempt to deal with this unbalance in the individual quite apart from the overall pattern of group-life which characterises the economic and social order in which he lives ? If our industrial order fails to achieve good group-life, is this not bound to be reflected to a very considerable extent in the life of every individual in society ? Modern studies of vast arrangements of an immense number of groups in mass production industry and total war have taught us certain lessons which we now forget to our peril. Above all, they teach us that there must be a clearly agreed and understood objective to serve as the highest common factor of all the groups involved, and that, once that is agreed and understood, the will to give in the individual to the common cause is immeasurably strengthened and developed. Without this overall objective, the complex group-life of an industrial order fails to achieve a sufficient measure of integration, and individuals throughout society tend to be more interested in getting from it than giving to it. In such a situation the Church may go on producing its occasional saints, but fails to affect the lives of the vast majority of individuals. Their lives could be affected for good by the Church only if Christian leadership were palpably evident in the task of integrating the total group-life of the industrial order. For that is the main determinant of people's lives in the world of to-day.

CHURCH, CHARTER, TRADE AND EMPLOYMENT

How then can the Church set about this task of modern ministry to which it has long been called ? It has to get into the position of leadership ; that is, it must point the way forward in the industrial world. To do that, it must move with a zeal according to knowledge into that intertwining of our interests as consumers, producers, and investors which is the whole field of industrial group-life. For that reason, it ought to have a great deal to do with making sure that the management of that industrial group-life (leaving to the political parties the whole question of how the investment is owned) should be Christian management.

To show that the Church knows what it is talking about when it attempts this task, let it drop the word "Industry" altogether, since that word is as capable of as many definitions as the word "Church" itself. Instead, I would suggest that the Church talks of "Trade and Employment", for those words cover more precisely the real concerns of industrial group management. What that management seeks is, first, the fullest possible *employment* of all our resources of manpower and investment, in order, second, to satisfy consumer needs by *trade,* so that all individuals shall have the opportunity to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity. How is the Church to know that this is the objective of our industrial group-life? Here we can be on very firm ground. If we turn up the pages of *Hansard* to an entry of June 8th, 1944, we find there the report, accepted and ratified by our own government at the time, of the Philadelphia Charter, which was signed by the representatives of Governments, Employers, and Trade Unionists, in forty other nations besides our own. (Since then these nations have grown to a total of eighty, in full agreement with the objective defined in the Philadelphia Charter). The relevant passage from the Charter for the Church's purpose is as follows:

> "(a) all human beings irrespective of race, creed or sex, have the right to pursue both their material well-being and their spiritual development in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity;
>
> (b) the attainment of the conditions in which this shall be possible must constitute the central aim of national and international policy;
>
> (c) all national and international policies and measures, in particular those of an economic and financial character, should be judged in this light and accepted only insofar as they may be held to promote and not to hinder this fundamental objective."

Surely there can be no question that this is the righteousness after which the modern world should hunger and thirst. The Church's clear task is to play an integral part in keeping the world up to its avowed ideal. And here industrial group management would be willing to accept the Church's ministry, provided the Church showed that it knew what it was doing. We would have to prove that we understand how within our own nation's industrial group-life there are three main parties concerned with management, *viz.*: the Government, the Employers and the Trade Unions. The only time in this century when these three parties have agreed and worked enthusiastically together towards a common objective, as the highest common factor, both emotionally and intellectually, of their common interest, was from 1940 until the end of the war, and in a weaker sense after the war until about the middle of 1947, when the feeling of having a common objective began to be blurred.

Without a Church (or something like a Church) playing an integrating part in industrial group-life, the difficulty of sustaining effort towards a common objective is demonstrably defeating. What fails is the impulse to give, that interest among the basic four in all group-life, which provides the greatest cohesive force. The impulse to give in its turn seems to depend on the maintenance of a common objective and upon a common consciousness. This, according to Marx and the Communist régime following him, must be determined by the structure of industrial group-life. The objective or target, *e.g.,* a Five-year Plan, must be fixed in order that the common consciousness may be moulded, and the response to the demands of industry sustained. We of the democratic nations find ourselves in a weaker position. Having to agree a common objective and sustain that agreement within a democratic system reveals us at a disadvantage *vis-a-vis* the Marxist, believing as he does that the common consciousness must be

based on the economic structure of society, and not, as we maintain, *vice versa*. The crux of democracy is the faith that the common objective in our industrial society must be agreed by its members rather than imposed upon them. We have to stand or fall by that faith. That is our present crisis, and that is where the Christian Church must come in.

MAN'S WILLINGNESS TO GIVE

The great majority of those in the three parties concerned in the management of our industrial group-life, *viz.*: the Government, Employers and Trades Unions, are at one in recognising this key-principle of democratic order. It implies a view of human nature and of the evolution of the human species consonant with the teaching of Christ, *i.e.*, that man is essentially love, and the product of love, as God is love. Giving or loving cannot be compelled—it belongs to the free and spontaneous essential nature of man, to his personal status in the created order. For that reason, the democratic ideal seeks to realise the community of persons, and does so by attempting to reduce the compulsion of the individual in society to a minimum, leaving him in fact free to give. We avowed Christians have set ourselves on the far more excellent but also far more difficult way which leads from a society based on fear to a community motivated by love. We have many moments of doubt about the validity of this view of man. We are probably passing through a phase of this kind of doubt at the present time. But for the most part, we know we cannot go back on it, even though in the midst of our present complexities, it seems oversimplified and impracticable. Yet, despite the Marxist's apparently greater present success in the integration of his industrial group-life, there would be few in the West who would want deliberately to jettison our high respect for human personality, and deny its essential need for freedom. In that fundamental belief, the Church is still at one with the majority of the people who live in the West. From that common starting-point the Church revitalised and industrial management could go far together.

But there is need, first of all, to consolidate this challenging conception, by making it unassailably clear that the wide-awake Christian believes not that the impulse to help others is merely one of the various constituents in our human nature, but that it is the prime motive force in the evolution of our species. The *locus classicus* of modern scientific justification for that belief is for me Sherrington's Gifford Lectures, *Man on His Nature,* particularly the last lecture in which he summarises his great theme of "altruism as passion". But for those who do not need this kind of justification in intellectual conviction, it will be sufficient to consult the New Testament *passim*. For the Christian, man's future evolution, even the continued existence of the human species will depend, as his past, entirely on the dominance of that motive. In human group-structure, as abundant evidence in history can be called to testify, wherever the impulse to give towards the future is weakened, and subordinated to the desire to get and keep, man's form of civilisation begins to disintegrate and pass away. "All true progress" said L. P. Jacks "is progress in charity." And the conclusion of Toynbee's *Study of History* is that human civilisations, rising and falling throughout history, can only truly be judged by the measure of their contribution to the difficult art of loving one another.

Admittedly, there is still a great deal of study to be given in this field of man's understanding of himself. There are those who would question which of the instincts—that to preserve oneself or to give in community—is the earlier in man. For all that, democracy is already implicitly committed in this debate, on the side of the angels. Admittedly, people do not like to say so openly, because, as things are, they cannot avoid a certain sense of hypocrisy, of failing to practise what they preach. But in the assertion—and this they do not hesitate to make—that the individual personality must be yielded the maximum freedom of choice, the free use

of the individual's vote, they are tacitly pinning their hope of the future to the faith that the human soul is naturally Christian, and that the impulse in man to give will prevail.

FULL EMPLOYMENT EVERYWHERE—THE FIRST OBJECTIVE

The temptation for eager Churchmen—eager, that is, to make the Church's ministry effective in the industrial order—is to rush in with suggested common objectives for industry. But apart from the disadvantage that these objectives are usually impossibly high-falutin', they tend also to ignore two important facts. First, that in a democratic order it is not practical politics to impose an objective, and second, that the British Employers, the British Trades Unionists, and the the British Government have already agreed with other nations on our behalf what is the first common objective of our industrial group-life. This is clearly stated in that same I.L.O. Declaration signed at Philadelphia in 1944 and still reconfirmed annually at Geneva—that every nation must commit itself to organise and manage its industrial life to secure satisfactory full employment and the raising of standards of living. And on page 35 of the Labour Party's recent publication *Plan for Progress* it will be seen that our own T.U.C. at last has officially endorsed the policy of securing satisfactory full employment as the primary industrial objective. And the terms of reference of the Government's new independent committee to report on prices, productivity, incomes and profits, directs that the committee work "having regard to the desirability of full employment and increasing standards of life, based on expanding production and reasonable stability of prices". Therefore, in the light of the I.L.O. Declaration the main thing for churchmen to grasp is that full employment has already been agreed by all the parties concerned in the management of the nation's industry as the primary practical objective common to them all: to that all other objectives are secondary.

It is important to re-iterate that full employment means far more than keeping men at work, just as industry means far more than "factories and all that sort of thing". Full employment means that the management of our industry must set and achieve trade targets which will use to the utmost all the resources of manpower and investment in the nation. What those targets should be is obviously in the field of the industrial expert, and the Church has no need to enter it, except in the person of Christians already engaged in that field whether as constituent members of the Government, or of the Employers' Federations or of the Trades Union Congress. They do not require us to do their work for them, even if we could.

Where the Church can help, and must acquire enough knowledge and understanding to be able to do so, is in keeping industrial management up to the highest common level of its vision. The danger which besets the Church is to look round for some more high-sounding rôle in the world, and thus fail to take the *given* people as they are. The first plain fact of our situation is that industrial democracy has at no time agreed any other common objective than satisfactory full employment as a practical achievement. And the second fact, no less plain, is that in an industrial democratic order an agreed common objective is a *sine qua non,* if good industrial group-life is to be achieved and maintained. While the effects of the experience of the war lingered, these facts were fairly generally appreciated. In London, in 1946, there was held the first United Nations' Conference on Trade and Employment which, in effect, adopted the objectives of the I.L.O. Charter signed and ratified at Philadelphia. Two subsequent conferences were held and, in 1947, the Havana Charter in Trade and Employment was signed. Unfortunately, (I quote from *The Basic Facts about the United Nations,* from the U.N. Office of Public Information) "within eighteen months it became clear that the leading trading powers

were not going to ratify it without considerable delay . . . the organisation will come into being when it has been accepted by countries which account for a high proportion of world trade". So in what we are pleased to call the free world, our industrial group-life still waits the effective impetus of an agreed common objective.

Our own country could do much to accelerate that impetus. What holds us up here at home? The truth of our national situation is that although we have a National Production Advisory Council for Industry (with its own regional and district constituencies) comprising full representation of Employers, Trades Unions and the Government, it has not yet agreed its primary common objective towards which it can approve and discuss our National Trade and Employment Targets. This body recently engaged the attention of the Trades Union Council, as reported in a special article in *The Times* of July 6th, 1959. The T.U.C.'s main contention is that the N.P.A.C.I. could be of far greater use than at present. Certainly, if that body were revitalised, it could become democratically responsible for guiding the nation on our Trade and Employment problem—indeed could well be a genuine and effective National Trade and Employment Council, with its regional boards and district committees supporting it, right down to the Local Employment Committee level.

It was my privilege to have a small part in the activity of the famous Medway Towns Full Employment Council, which towards the end of the war brought together a whole community of people of all shades of political opinion to secure satisfactory full employment for its 150,000 inhabitants. (Incidentally, there was no place for me on that Council *qua* Churchman. In order to obtain a place, I had to get myself elected a Town Councillor, and then be appointed to the Full Employment Council as one of Chatham's civic representatives. I think that this is significant of the Church's present situation in an industrial society). The pioneer work done by the Medway Towns Council helped to get new types of Local Employment Committees reconstituted officially under the Ministry of Labour in every other local community throughout the country. But these local employment committees and their purpose have largely been ignored so far, as have the Regional Boards for Industry with their district committees. These are in being, ready to be geared into a National Trade and Employment organisation, and would prove of great constructive value in pursuit of agreed common objectives, if given the chance. The whole field of our industrial group-life seems to be waiting for the many complex elements to be given organic unity. We are so near the good industrial group-life we desire and need, and yet at the moment, for want of some integrating movement, it seems so far.

CAN WE MEET TO-DAY'S NEED?

What has all this to do with the Church? Apart from the fact that every solitary churchman and churchwoman, as I have shown earlier, is willy-nilly a member of one or more of the manifold industrial groups which go to make up the vast labyrinth which we hazily call "industry", there is, as I am convinced, a genuine need within the industrial order for the kind of Christian thinking and understanding which the Church above all others should be best fitted to supply. At present, we have not the knowledge, the ideas, or the language, which could answer that need. But we could acquire them by study, and patience, and humility. The Christian ministry in the modern world does not seem to demand of us any of the evangelistic fervour and conversion techniques which would provide us with much dramatic activity. On the contrary, we seem among other things to be required by our Master to serve quietly and intelligently in what might appear, and no doubt are, rather humdrum workaday human groups. For instance, the Church has a nation-wide parochial system covering the whole range of the Local Employment Committees. There ought to be at least one intelligent, warmhearted, hardworking churchman on every one

of them. And behind them, there should be an effective organisation of churchpeople in every parish, studying, however painfully, yet none the less determinedly, to understand of what kind are the immediate problems arising from the fact that ours is an industrial civilisation, and what are the needs which must be met to achieve the conditions of Trade and Employment envisaged in the Philadelphia Charter of the I.L.O. The Church to-day is simply not in the industrial picture, except circumferentially in a few sporadic experiments where clergymen have made evangelistic incursions into production plans, or in the agricultural industry where the blessing of the plough can perpetuate an archaic reminiscence. But we of the Church could earn our rightful place at the very heart of the new and vital industrial world, if we will but listen and learn, and speak only when and where the word is clearly given us.

BUILDING IN FELLOWSHIP

That returns me to my own present point of departure. The task of helping to re-build a blitzed church in the heart of London at once thrills and sobers me. But what really matters most in Cheapside to-day and to-morrow is the best possible structure of our national trade and employment that we can help to achieve. Upon achieving it depends the good life of many, indeed countless, individuals not only within but especially beyond our shores. Therefore, I would like above all that the new church, of the famous Bow Bells, rising in Cheapside should be given its place in the City's real life and work, an integral part in the ennoblement of our democratic industrial order, and that those eager to follow further the thought expressed in this paper will get in touch with me at St. Mary-le-Bow, Cheapside, or with us at the Industrial Christian Fellowship, 195 New Kent Road, S.E.1.

I realise that to earn that privilege and helpful friendship it is necessary to do far more than restore an ancient building, however famous and endeared to the trading groups within the City and beyond. For that reason I rejoiced to be given also the task of contributing to the research and study of the Industrial Christian Fellowship, not least because the very title of that organisation seems to me to enshrine the heart of the matter. If I were asked to define the objective of the Church in the modern world, I think that I could do far worse than answer that the Church exists to create in our world an industrial christian fellowship, and that our worship in the middle of the twentieth century should glorify God in that urgent primary purpose from which peace on earth may follow.

We have the almost over-powering industrial order as our given situation in all its present complexity: we have implicit and waiting to be realised in it the stubborn and supremely difficult faith that there can and must be an effective democratic industrial group-life consonant with the Christian view of man's true nature: and we have the I.L.O. ideal affirmed in a world-wide community; towards which we are pledged so to frame national and international policies as to ensure that all human beings, irrespective of race, creed or sex, have their right to pursue their material well-being, and their spiritual development, in conditions of freedom and dignity, of economic security and equal opportunity. We have still to take the first difficult step towards the fulfilment of that pledge: we have to achieve satisfactory full employment, the first of our agreed objectives.

There is a very great ministry before the Church here—the same ministry as ever, but strangely new—to set men free again to give towards the coming brotherhood, the Kingdom of Christ. But we need first to train ourselves for it—to discover how to make the rough places plain and the crooked paths straight towards the industrial christian fellowship of mankind.

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